

A NEW WAY
TO SOLVE
OLD PROBLEMS

FRANK E. DUDDY



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BY

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IN FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, TOLEDO, OHIO

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TO THE TEACHERS AND OFFICERS OF
FIRST CHURCH SCHOOL
IN SINCERE APPRECIATION OF THEIR UNFAILING
LOYALTY AND CO-OPERATION

FOREWORD

THE need of true religious education of the youth of our day is so urgent that more thought and less tradition must be set to the task. Religious truth can enter the minds of boys and girls, but it must enter by true psychological doors. Fine Christian character can take deeper hold upon the lives of young folks if the expressions of that character can reach them by the smooth roads of high-grade teaching. If we expect to educate our youth we must plan for the careful use of more time to do it. Study courses that truly meet the needs of young minds are expressions of good judgment in religion as in any other area of life.

The story of methods and the outline of study contained in this little book, represent the sincere and fearless attempt upon the part of a church to meet more completely and more efficiently the needs of religious education. Great credit is due to Professor Clayton C. Kohl for the searching and thought-provoking way in which he placed before the teachers and officers of the First Church Bible School the religious-education conditions of our day. In all the months of discussion and planning Professor

Kohl had the confidence and support of the pastor of the church and the religious-work director. The splendid results could not have come to pass without the tactful, intelligent, painstaking, and enthusiastic leadership of Reverend Frank E. Duddy, the religious-work director. Still more gratifying, if possible, was the way officers, teachers, and parents saw the new approaches and co-operated with loyalty, intelligence, and enthusiasm in bringing the new and enriched school into actual life and service.

'The results are: enthusiasm upon the part of the scholars, joy and confidence in the hearts and minds of the parents, a new and wonderful spirit and expectation throughout the whole church, and a prophecy of intelligent and loyal Christians for the future.

ALLEN A. STOCKDALE,
*Pastor, First Congregational Church,
Toledo, Ohio.*

PREFACE

SINCE the war there has been an insistent demand for more religion. Among the first to point out the vital need was one of the country's foremost statisticians. His plea for more religion in business was followed by many statements of others interested in business methods to the effect that unless more religion was forthcoming the business of the country was in a fair way to go on the rocks of moral bankruptcy. Labor began to call for the application of Christian principles to the status of the workman. Educators, headed by several of the presidents of the larger universities, took up the cry and told their students that the world needed more than ever a profession and living of vital religion. Social-service workers sounded anew their note of the responsibility of a man to his neighbor.

This demand has not been lost upon the church. She is endeavoring in every way at her command to give to the world more religion. Some of these ways, however, lack decidedly in an ability to function efficiently; they do not produce the results desired. Upon no department of church activity does this criticism fall more justly than upon the department which teaches its children

to worship. Religion will never mean a great deal to a child unless he grows up in its spirit, and that spirit cannot be impressed upon him unless true worship is taught. Worship by the cultivation of attitudes of thoughtfulness, reverence, and prayer fosters the growth of religion, and no religion worthy of the name can be fostered in any other way.

The time has come when the church must look into the work of her schools and find out just how much they are or are not doing in the teaching of worship; whether the children are coming to have a respect and love for the church and its teachings.

Here lies the foundation for contemporary religious education; there must be a spirit of worship if religion is to come into its own. Sunday-schools have not failed completely of their purpose, but they have come a long way from realizing some of the goals which are within their reach. If the members of any church would demand that the Sunday-school develop a spirit of worship in its children and actively co-operated with the minister and his helpers in securing that result, there would be a different kind of school in the church. But until that time of general interest and co-operation comes—that community of interests between church and Sunday-school—the spirit of worship will not be implanted in the heart of the child and the world will not receive from the church the religion it needs.

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A NEW WAY TO SOLVE OLD PROBLEMS

CHAPTER I

PSYCHOLOGICAL GROUNDS FOR A CHANGE

ANY one desiring to effect radical changes in an institution of long standing and of great social worth faces a tremendous responsibility. Worn-out institutions are likely to be rendering greater service than progressive thinkers are willing to assign to them. The Sunday-school has a creditable history, and it is still doing valuable work. No one should attack it without being fairly sure of his ground. Indirectly it has been attacked in a thousand ways by the very men and women who are keeping it alive. Those who write its lesson courses and helps also write the religious psychology and pedagogy that are dooming it to destruction. Religious education has a fine body of literature, but the Sunday-school has not had leaders who have been willing to risk the fundamental changes necessary for the adaptation of this literature to real school practice. Say what one will, the traditional Sunday-school is an effete institution; and some one who realizes the responsibility and counts all the risks must venture to launch a change.

2 *PSYCHOLOGICAL GROUNDS FOR A CHANGE*

Those who attempt to put psychology and pedagogy into actual school practice face an appalling task. It demands hours and hours of prayer, weeks and weeks of study, and years and years of experimentation. When this psychology and pedagogy are religious, the task is more than appalling, it is overwhelming. An aim in theory is one thing, to translate it into terms of child consciousness is quite another; content on paper is a wholly different matter from content in the form of ideas and feelings; the method stated in the form of principles is a total stranger to the same rules or laws as expressed in the form of spiritual reactions. Any thoughtful person who has read a hundred of the best books on religious education may have an illuminating and shocking experience by visiting or teaching week after week in any average Sunday-school with his critical attention and judgment at their best. This is the precise experience that a rational reformer of the Sunday-school must have, at least in the beginning of his endeavors. This chapter attempts to sketch such an experience.

According to modern thought, the aim of religious education is to inculcate reverence for God, brotherhood of mankind, and all those great moral virtues which the common consciousness of the best of the race has found essential to refined personal character and efficient social service. Put into more concrete terms, the aim

is to instil progressively into the individual's mind and soul a love for Christ, an appreciative understanding of his philosophy of life, and an ever-abiding body of habits that will carry these out into conduct. So exalted and so comprehensive is the aim that no satisfactory expression of it in words is possible. Its ramifications are endless and bewildering. Be this as it may, it is inevitable; and it is toward this great goal that the Sunday-school must work.

To translate this aim into terms of human consciousness, even child consciousness, is the practical problem of the Sunday-school reformer. Thomas a Kempis, Rauschenbusch, Peabody, and Fosdick might offer great help, and yet they do not quite reach the teacher's special difficulty. He must get them into terms of mental processes in order that he can build. In attempting this, he discerns at once that the root of the religious aim is feeling—the most difficult thing in the world to educate, and the one aspect of mind about which least is known. The great goals of religious training are ideals, sentiments, attitudes, faith. The next thing he will notice is that knowledge supports these feelings, but not any kind of knowledge. The ideas that furnish the nourishment for these ideals is a particular kind of knowledge. Names of the books of the Bible, geography of the Holy Land, conceptual golden texts, may or may not be the kind of informational ma-

terial needed. A third psychological radiation of the aim is easily seen; namely, feelings live and have their being in habits of action as well as in ideas. The great moral virtues indissolubly linked with religion are in great part habit. Faith and creed cannot keep them alive if they are denied exercise. The aim, therefore, becomes something quite dynamic if it is ever to be gotten off the paper and into human minds.

Still another phase of the problem of aim presents itself: Is such an exalted and difficult goal possible with children and youth? Religious psychologists say that it is. Hall, Coe, Dawson, and many others point out that the child and the youth are peculiarly responsive to certain of the greatest religious feelings. A thoughtful observer cannot help but feel that they are right. Practical teachers know that children and youth grasp many great ideas, at least in part; and they know that the young nervous system is quick to form habits. Child psychology, therefore, offers hope and cheer as one contemplates the great purpose of religious training.

In the work of the Sunday-school lies a beautiful vision, if an artist instead of a clumsy hand could paint it. Now, in full contemplation of this work, turn to the Sunday-school as it is. Is reverence for God dawning in the pupils' minds? Is brotherly love manifesting itself more and more as the child progresses through the school?

Are the great moral virtues functioning more certainly as the days go on? Does the school breathe the atmosphere in which these normally live? Does the knowledge taught impinge upon the great feelings and habits that ought to be the ultimate aim? If religion is basically a set of ideals, feelings, and attitudes supported by proper knowledge and habits, then every psychological law governing their generation and development is violated in the traditional Sunday-school. A discussion of this forces a consideration of the environment of the school, the course of study, methods, and the teacher.

The average Sunday-school room is usually a very uninviting place. Bare walls, pillars or posts, irregularly dispersed chairs and tables, gaudy prize stars, old bookcases no longer needed in the pastor's study, dirty blackboards with statistics of collections and attendance upon them, torn song-books, and much else of like character may be seen. No great feelings can endure in this. Moreover, many aspects of mob psychology are present in the average Sunday-school room when work is going on. Children and older people are rushing about to find their places, coming in at all times and going out at all times. Bells are ringing, secretaries and treasurers are running about their duties, material is being hunted, special announcements are being made, parties and special programmes are being planned, and classes

are reciting—all usually in one or at least a few rooms. The whole process takes all told an hour. Can reverence in this dwell? The sombre dignity of the great church with its organ and song is reserved for the adults; the basement is given to the Sunday-school. The stained-glass windows and the soft carpet are given to the men and women; the children take the appurtenances. Sentiments have settings; they live in associations that are congenial to them. Think of a cosey public-school room with its flowers, pictures, quiet, and its intimate group spirit and then come back to the Sunday-school room! No blindness, except that bred by tradition, could think of tolerating such conditions as these to furnish an environment for these wonderful emotions that the pulpit strives to engender—in adults.

Another principle of the psychology of feeling is that it is contagious. By imitation and suggestion, radiating from personality, one catches sentiments from others. In day-schools there are many virile men and women who feel their calling, love their subjects, become enthusiastic in their presentations, linger in their rooms, read and talk their themes at every occasion, buy books and dream dreams and have visions. Contrast the average Sunday-school teacher: late or absent; chosen because he or she is the sole available person; untrained in any art of teaching; visionless or dead so far as dynamic religion is

concerned; with no sympathy for the dawning mind. From the athletic teacher the boy may catch the football spirit; from the butterfly high-school girl the little girl may catch the taste for a ribbon; from the pious old lady the youth may catch what he calls the "jimjams." This picture is crudely drawn, but with no unkindness. It is a simple fact. The athletic, the giddy, and the pious are not necessarily to be excluded from the Sunday-school staff; but there must be something added. Reverence for God, brotherliness, and faith in virtue must be there, too, if they are ever to pass from teacher to pupil.

Another great law of the psychology of feeling is that its associated ideas and images are selected with a peculiar fitness to its hue and temper. The elements of every great feeling situation are unique. There is something unitary about the situation. It is shot through and through with apperceptive ties. In the day-school Washington, Lincoln, the Revolution, the Civil War, *Rip Van Winkle*, *The Children's Hour*, *Snow-Bound*, and hosts of other personalities and scenes are studied through until a co-ordinated impression or attitude is gotten. In the Sunday-school no great characters or scenes or events are pursued long enough or consistently enough to leave any unitary impression. So strong is the desire to inculcate a moral lesson, that texts give mere fragments and then proceed to moralize upon

them. Even the life of Christ, the most wonderful, simple, and penetrating in world history, is dealt with in a fragmentary way. By the side of day-school texts Sunday-school texts are an abomination. Sketchy, sentimentalized, chopped up by notes, illustrated by commonplaces, sugared over with a pale cast of baby-like talk, they become repulsive to healthy boys and girls. Leaflets are there in legion (teacher's manual, pupil's manual, first quarters, second quarters, helps, suggestions). Rarely does one ever have personality enough to make anybody desire to keep it. Great sentiments often cling about books—the Bible, for example. Lack of time and money are indeed great handicaps; but if love of country is worth magnificent texts of United States history, is not love for God and Christ and the prophets worth equally fine texts in language adapted to the young? We have them for adults outside of the Sunday-school. After one reads Dean Hodges's fine book on "Training Children in Religion," he often wonders if the Sunday-school is not injuring rather than helping the child toward a religious culture. The great need in the Sunday-school course of study is that of having the Bible and other religious material organized from the point of view of a rational aim. The course is to-day what the course in general history in the day-school was thirty years ago—an epitome of facts. It is impossible to culture the great reli-

gious emotions on fragmentary ideas and images. The Bible and religious material exist in abundance; and much of it is excellent, some of it genuine art. Histories, stories, biographies, pictures, and dramas exist that could be woven into wonderful programmes of study for the church school. Beginnings have been made, but the great body of the work lies ahead.

The unique character of the religious aim forces the reconstruction of many principles of method as developed in secular pedagogy. Teaching methods are in large part directed toward the intellectual aspects of the classroom. The religious aim, as pointed out above, is dominantly emotional. Thinking in science may have little effective tone and yet function well; thinking in religion must function in faith and conduct. The appreciation element must run high in the Sunday-school classroom. All teaching is an art; religious teaching is a supreme art, so much so that some writers question whether religion can be taught. Two matters mentioned earlier in the chapter are fundamental to this question of method: one is the superior teacher and the other is the unitary lesson. When it comes to the detail of method, it is next to impossible to speak in specific terms. A few general principles, however, may be sketched. Too much detail, too much analysis, too much expanding and elaboration are injurious to appreciation. A teacher

cannot do the appreciating for the pupils; they must read and tell stories and discuss and dramatize. Contemplation and expression are psychological prerequisites for high sentiment. *Teachers do all the work in the average Sunday-school to-day; in the new school the pupils will do a large part of it.* Another principle closely related to this resides in the relation between feeling and action. Ideals and motives and high purposes die when they do not function in real conduct. The scouting movement has caught this principle and is making some telling use of it. Sunday-school instruction vaporizes to-day; and this is due to weak class organization, lack of co-operation from the community life about. There is besides a naïve isolation between the Sunday-school and the church itself. The former seems in almost no way to prepare or train for the latter. The element of worship central in the services of the church gets scant support in the school. Lack of time and indifference are in part the cause of this condition; but the fundamental reason for it lies in the fact that teachers and officers do not understand the aim of religious instruction when put into terms of mind and therefore have no criterion for the judging of methods.

No one knows enough about the institutional teaching of religion to be justified in cynical dogmatism regarding it. Modern religious books make a powerful appeal even to laymen. Such

wonderful possibilities seem to lie in store for earnest workers that they cannot stand back longer and view effort going to waste. They are compelled to attempt the translation of these visions into working and workable religious instruction. The simplest practical psychology shows that the Sunday-school as it now exists is almost ridiculous in some of its practices. The basic grounds for change do not reside in any materialistic conception of the problems. To furnish new equipment, new rooms, new teachers, and modern business methods will not, in themselves, remedy the situation. The crucial problem lies first and foremost in a vital understanding of the growth of the religious consciousness, and following this an adaptation of the content and method to the ends sought. Religious leaders are attempting the one, but practical workers are far behind with the other.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT

It was at a dinner of the teachers and officers of the church school in the latter part of May, 1919, that this sentiment found expression: "All is not well with our school." Reports had shown a higher percentage of attendance than formerly, larger financial gifts, but nowhere was mention made of better teaching or greater interest on the part of the pupils. The first speaker and those that followed remarked on the absence of such a statement, and the superintendent in conclusion frankly spoke of the growing dissatisfaction among teachers and parents with the lack of definite educational results in the present conduct of the school.

Suggestions were invited and given, the outcome of the discussion being the appointment of a committee consisting of the two pastors, the superintendent, and two other laymen. This committee was asked to go fully into the difficulties of the situation and upon the basis of their study give to the first fall meeting of the teachers and officers certain reform measures.

A survey of the school revealed the faults com-

mon to the conventional type of Sunday-school, *i. e.*, too little time for lesson-study; overcrowding of rooms, and the consequent confusion, disorder, and lack of discipline; irregular and non-systematic instruction due to irregular attendance on the part of both teacher and pupil. These faults resulted inevitably in a pupil generally uninformed at the end of the year in the basic principles and facts which his course was supposed to teach. The ordinary pupil who had no help, or interest, at home could not have passed the simplest kind of an examination covering the work of the year. To this state of affairs all the defects of the present system of school conduct had contributed; an environment existed which made it nearly impossible for even the serious-minded student and teacher to do satisfactory work.

Who was to blame? There could be no time wasted considering that point. Rather the question, how shall the faults be remedied and a new environment created? demanded immediate answer. An attempt to solve the problem of overcrowding eventually showed the way to solve the whole problem. The school had been meeting from 12 to 1, all departments and classes crowded into the parish house if possible, the overflow convening in the church auditorium, a separate building. The question suggested itself—why not have the younger children meet in the parish house during church service and the older children

and adults have the extra room later? The committee agreed that the idea was worth consideration, and on the basis of creating a junior and a senior school began to shape plans for a completely revised programme of religious education in the church.

Naturally with the making of new plans came the conception of finer ideals for the school—more earnest study, firmer discipline, and better informed pupils. It was agreed that if the school could not train the children for intelligent church-membership—ground them well in the knowledge of the Bible, church history, and first principles of Christian living—it had failed in the fundamental duty of religious education. With the ideal then of preparing children through a period of eight years and kindergarten for ultimate church-membership, the scheme advanced beyond the stage of vision into that of actual definite planning of how it might be made a reality.

The first problem to be attacked was the problem which comes to every serious-minded educator, that of teaching. A survey of the volunteer teaching force revealed some faithful and conscientious, some erratic and irresponsible, and a shortage of volunteers. Clearly the church-members had not received a vision of what religious education could mean and they were accordingly unprepared to accept any responsibility for a church school. The committee wasted no time in

trying to find more teachers; it said: "If the church wants to instruct its children, let her hire professional teachers and pay them. We will grade the school as in the grammar grades and hire teachers who are experienced in each grade; then we certainly can count on regular and able instruction."

Thus did the committee combine some twenty or more junior classes into eight grades and eliminate the problem of teacher shortage. This is a radical departure from ordinary Sunday-school methods, so radical, in fact, that there was some speculation as to how it would be received by the parents and church-members generally. But the committee had no fear of its ability to define the issue and justify the course suggested. The next problem to solve was quite as important as the first—the material to be used in order that the final result might be secured.

A careful perusal of the best of religious-education courses failed to discover a series of lessons which would give all the instruction the committee desired. Nothing remained to be done but to provide supplementary work which would complete the course; this additional work demanded additional time. Would the parents accept and support a longer session of the church school? There was no way to answer the question but by taking it to the parents.

The following campaign, designed by the com-

mittee, was presented to the teachers and officers at the first meeting in the fall of 1919:

1. A parents-teachers forum extending monthly throughout the winter in which this revised programme would be presented. (a) Consolidation of classes in one kindergarten grade and eight grammar grades. (b) Hire of professional teachers. (c) Study of a regular course through eight years with supplemental work. (d) Two-hour Sunday session for the same term as the grammar-school years.
2. A vigorous publicity from the pulpit, and through the church publication, *First Church News*—a publicity revealing faults in the present system and showing their correction in the revised.
3. A canvass of the parents in May, 1920, to present in booklet form the revised programme and to enlist support. This to consist of (a) co-operation in seeing that the children attend regularly and punctually; (b) interest in the work of the school; (c) assistance in maintaining the proper discipline.
4. A decision to continue work on the project so that it might be put in operation in the fall, or to let it go by—contingent upon the result of the canvass.

The programme of the campaign was heartily indorsed and the first forum held in October, 1919, convinced the committee that there was a demand on the part of parents for a complete revision of the church-school idea. As the months went by, the complete programme was worked out, and

when May came it was ready for final presentation in the canvass.

The canvass in June made by the teachers among the parents represented in their respective classes showed an overwhelming sentiment in favor of trying the new scheme. True, considerable scepticism was encountered, but it did not deter parents from saying that they would go a little way at least on the untried road

During the summer the programme was perfected as nearly as possibly could be done, and October 3, 1920, the junior school began its session at 10 o'clock with a corps of professional teachers under the director of religious education as principal. *From the first Sunday it has justified itself and to-day the junior school is as firmly a part of the church as is the morning service.* It is the morning service for the children.

The committee working on reconstruction feels now that one of the most valuable results of its work was the education that its efforts brought to the patrons of the Sunday-school. The school had lived in a kind of isolation; people were taking it for granted, its weakness as well as its strength. Forums, committee reports, publicity, discussion brought out suggestions and visions for the good of the school. These same adjuncts are being preserved in the new organization. A parent-teacher association may undoubtedly grow out of this experience.

CHAPTER III

ADMINISTRATION

AFTER the officers and teachers had approved the plan, it was submitted for final approval to the church committee. This body is a representative group of church-members including the deacons, the church staff, and presidents of various societies, the committee acting in an advisory capacity to the pastor and helping him formulate the polity of the church. Before any policy of the revised school becomes a part of the programme of the church, this committee must consider it and formally incorporate it.

The matter was thoroughly considered, unanimously approved, and the complete plan incorporated as a unit in the church programme. The committee also made these recommendations:

1. That the church school should be under the immediate supervision of the director of religious education.
2. That the director, subject to the approval of the committee, have the power to employ teachers, select and purchase materials, and in every way do what he considered best for the school.

3. That the trustees be asked to furnish additional funds during the coming year out of the church budget for the efficient conduct of the school.

The trustees promised that the 1921 budget would contain an increased appropriation for religious education and indorsed heartily the action of the church committee. With the action of the board of trustees and the church committee, the preliminary step in the reorganization of the church school was accomplished. The church now was pledged to the support of the school and made that pledge a matter of a budget item. In contrast to the old-time way of trying to raise sufficient funds by leaving it to the ingenuity of the superintendent, who in turn struggled with problems involving the pennies of children, this method of financial administration represented a radical departure from the methods of other days. The certainty of a settled income from the church made the planning of the year's work an easier business than formerly. Furthermore, the working force of the school did not feel that it was a detached unit of the church, but rather a definite part of the whole church programme.

In accordance with the recommendations of the church committee, the director of religious education, working with the superintendent, selected administrative supervisors for the various departments—adult and senior, intermediate, junior,

primary, and kindergarten. These supervisors, with the superintendent, secretaries, and treasurer, constituted the executive board of the school. This board has for its work the routine business of the school's administration, problems of unusual importance being discussed by the teachers of all departments at a general teachers' meeting.

CHAPTER IV

ORGANIZATION

1. *Grades*.—An arbitrary system of grading presents difficulties. The time when the work of the various grammar-school grades will be standardized is coming, but it has not arrived yet; until then educators must keep in the advance ranks of modern methods looking for the opening that will enable them to make more substantial gains.

Sunday-schools do not approach, in grading, the efficiency of public schools; at present the grading of grammar-schools may well serve as a model for church schools. The system upon which most Sunday-schools run is one of convenience and not intelligence. Classes include chums whose intellectual abilities are often as far apart as the poles; boys bring boys into their circles who may be older or younger, more intelligent or less; girls do likewise, and no regard is had for the difficulties which present themselves to the teacher who must face this assemblage of varying abilities and attempt to reach all in a helpful way in a limited amount of time. Clearly the public-school method of grading comes more nearly doing justice to the pupils than any method popularly employed.

First Church school was graded accordingly,

boys and girls being grouped into one grade, that one being the same as that to which they were accustomed day after day in grammar-school. In the high-school division the grading was done in a similar fashion, except that boys and girls had separate classes. The question naturally arose many times: "Why cannot my child be with his former classmates?" But the whole plan only needed to be presented again to the parents to help them see the reason and to secure the necessary co-operation.

Now the problem of lesson-teaching was simplified; the teacher had before her children of an average type of intelligence and she could teach as befitted that type without the fear of failing to reach the slower minds or to interest the keener members of the class.

2. *Lesson Material*.—In the selection of lesson material the nature of the whole course had to be taken into consideration again. As originally planned the work in the kindergarten and first eight grades was intended to prepare the child for intelligent church-membership; the lesson studied, then, must be of such a nature as to cover the study of the Bible, elementary facts in church history, and the meaning of the church-membership. It was found that no course printed included all these, so the next best thing was to take that course offering the nearest to what was wanted.

The material used for each grade aimed at the accomplishment of a certain amount of work for the year. The course planned follows:

Kindergarten:	Lessons from nature, from songs and stories.
First Grade:	God the Loving Father.
Second Grade:	God's Loyal Children.
Third Grade:	Jesus' Way of Love and Service.
Fourth Grade:	Lessons from the Bible—Genesis to Kings.
Fifth Grade:	Lessons from the Bible—Kings to end of Old Testament.
Sixth Grade:	Lessons from the Bible—Matthew to John.
Seventh Grade:	Lessons from the Bible—Acts to Revelation.
Eighth Grade:	Lives of Christian heroes, providing an outline of church history.

With such an outline of study the principal and the teachers can tell just what work should be covered in each grade; accordingly they can build the knowledge of succeeding years more intelligently.

It has been suggested that the course outlined does not include all the material desired by the board of directors. There remained for the board, then, the work of supplementing the course by adding such other material as would complete the original plan.

3. *Supplemental Work.*—Before making up

this supplemental work the aim of the eight or ten years of instruction was again called to the minds of the teachers, and out of the suggestions made the additional material was planned. The work for the first, second, and third grades found expression in the supervisor of those grades, a woman of long experience, one who knew and understood primary children thoroughly. Too long an exposition of the work planned is out of place here. Suffice it to say that all those grades have drill regularly in memorizing pertinent Bible verses, the second and third grades giving not only the verse but its location. The Lord's Prayer, the Beatitudes, simplified, Ten Commandments, certain Psalms—all these are included in the curricula of the first three grades.

The fourth grade gives special attention to the natural development of its course—the recounting of the stories of the first half of the Old Testament, lessons to be drawn from them, and the finding of such stories in the Bible. The fifth and sixth grades treat their work similarly. All three of these grades meet regularly every Sunday in a half-hour assembly where assigned pupils give the stories of their particular lessons, drill in Bible fundamentals is had, and the attempt is made to bring the world into the minds of the children by the recital of missionary history. This latter material is presented by the principal in story form with emphasis upon the part played by the local

church in the support of missionaries and their enterprises.

The seventh and eighth grades have their work supplemented by the dramatic expression of certain lessons to be found in their regular course. During the last half of the year the eighth grade has a short talk from the principal every Sunday on the fundamentals of church doctrine, organization, and what church-membership means.

Here at a glance is the outline of the supplementary work. How it can be presented, how it may be added to, are matters capable of adjustment to local situations. As time passes new phases of study will probably be developed; certainly the working of the plan is so flexible as to provide ample opportunity for the insertion of such new study.

4. *Teachers and Helpers.*—Around the problem of teaching revolves the success or failure of any school. The church school used to be placed on the excepted list, but it cannot longer be listed there if the church faces honestly the matter of bringing her schools up to a standard of efficient instruction. Time was (and time now is) when teachers of Sunday-school classes were used because they volunteered to help and not because they had any ability as teachers. The church appreciated their help; it does now. But the time is coming when church-members will awaken to the fact that instruction of children cannot be

left even partially to those who are used because they offer their assistance. Men and women will continue to volunteer, but they must be of that character that inspires trust and following, in other words, they must be people who have the ability to teach. Whether they are paid for their services or not is not so important as the fact that such teachers must be had.

First Church school, because of its financial basis, sought out and found professional teachers and offered them remuneration at a rate little lower than the prevailing grammar-school teacher's salary. These teachers possessed that type of pioneering spirit that embraces any opportunity for venture into new fields. Such a spirit bespoke genuine interest and consecrated endeavor, a devotion to the ideals which a church would implant in its young. Without exception the teachers selected have proven faithful to every obligation and have, by their own testimony, felt themselves repaid many times for Sunday's activity (in addition to a week of teaching) by the accomplishment of things hoped for in former Sunday-school experience.

Substitute teachers are provided in every grade, and the first few Sundays the regular teacher and her assistant work together so that their methods of work may harmonize and the scholars know both teachers. If for any reason the regular instructor is not present, the assistant takes her

place and the effect is quite different from that produced by thrusting a total stranger in upon the class.

5. *Groupings*.—In the routine Sunday work of the school various groupings have been found satisfactory, especially in the matters of assembly and of recreation. For instance, the first, second, and third grades meet for the opening and closing sessions together; but on account of the size of the classes the first and second grades cannot combine with the third for the recreation period. The fourth to the eighth grades inclusive have their opening and closing sessions together. While the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades are having their supplemental work in one assembly, the seventh and eighth grades are dramatizing Biblical and religious incidents.

CHAPTER V

THE SCHOOL AT WORK

THE regular Sunday programme of the junior school of First Church could not better be described than to give a detailed account of a normal Sunday's work. It is conducted in three groups—kindergarten, primary, and junior—all at the same time but in different parts of the building. The conduct of the kindergarten is an adaptation of kindergarten methods to religious uses; with the help of the proper material and equipment a good teacher can arrange the work so as to secure the best results. (The material used in this and other departments will be itemized in the next chapter.)

PRIMARY DEPARTMENT

At 10 o'clock this department opens under the direction of the supervisor, assisted by a pianist and a chorister. Until 10.30 the opening exercises continue, consisting of Bible verses, etc. At 10.30 the three grades included in this department separate for a half-hour's study of their several lessons; the classes being grouped in separate rooms. Each teacher has a blackboard, and the lesson is illustrated there in colored chalk—the

school artist puts the work on early Sunday morning.

The time for recreation comes at 11 o'clock and all three grades gather on the floor of the dining-room for twenty minutes of games and motion songs. Following the recreation, the classes resume to do supplemental work for thirty-five minutes. Dismissal of the primary department comes without a closing session, the teachers feeling that they would rather have that time for instruction than for a formal concluding exercise.

JUNIOR DEPARTMENT

This department opens its session at 10 o'clock and for fifteen minutes devotes its time to the singing of church hymns. Under the direction of a skilled precentor a new hymn is learned each Sunday and it is reviewed often enough to keep it in the memory. The next ten minutes, sometimes fifteen, are used for responsive reading, prayer, and the principal's story sermon; then the classes convene, each in separate places for their regular work.

The eighth grade remains with the instructor in dramatics in the assembly-hall, where the opening is held. This hall is equipped with a stage and the necessary accessories, and here the pupils study chosen incidents from their class work in a dramatic way, the period of practical study and demonstration being forty minutes. At the end

of that time, the seventh and eighth grades change places—the eighth grade going for class work and the seventh coming for its dramatic interpretation for forty minutes. The teacher of the seventh-grade class work does the eighth-grade work also and the same dramatic instructor suffices for both classes.

Meantime the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades have their class work for forty-five minutes and at 11.15 come together in assembly for supplemental work. During the next thirty-five minutes these children are trained in an expressional way by the principal (the director of religious education); the training consists of standing before the assembly and telling the story of the lesson of the preceding Sunday, *i. e.*, one from the fourth grade tells very briefly the story of the lesson he had in his class work last Sunday. Representatives from all three grades speak, and not only is public-speaking practice secured but a perpetual review conducted, beneficial, not only to the sixth grade, but helpful to the fourth and fifth grades, because it gives an idea of coming work. Oftentimes the teacher divides the lesson story among three or four pupils and all take part in its recital. This practice takes up the first half of the assembly period; the last half is used for the other supplemental work—memorizing passages from the Bible, Biblical facts, and a concluding missionary story usually centring

around the fields of one of the missionaries from the local church (First Church supports eight in different parts of the world).

The junior department reconvenes at 11.50 for a closing song, which is usually the new one learned at the opening session. The principal gives the benediction and the pupils sing the "Amen." The teachers and officers feel that a closing exercise is more necessary for the junior division than for the primary; acquaintance with church worship is taught as a natural outgrowth of the whole system of instruction.

RECORDS AND GRADES

The teacher of each grade is provided with a card for each pupil. (See page 32.)

All six of these marks are not made every Sunday, but the first two, attendance and punctuality, are always made at the beginning of the class-study period; a pupil is marked late if he comes in after the first song has been sung. The remaining four spaces are graded by the teacher or her assistant (there being assistants in the first to fifth grades) during the class period or afterward; such marks are matters of deliberation and impression rather than of snap judgment. Every class gives a collection, which is taken during the roll-call and is sent to the school secretary, together with a statement of the number of pupils present.

Toledo, Ohio

Address

Age..... Phone.....

Name of Father.....

Name of Mother,.....

[illegible]

Teacher

Grade 341.....

Actual size 3¾ x 9½ inches.

Once every two months a grade report is sent to the home, addressed to the father or mother. (See page 34.) Accompanying this is a letter from the principal telling of the progress of the school or bringing some matter to the attention of the parents. While the experiment of grading church-school work is quite new, First Church School teachers believe that already it has justified itself because of the awakening of many adults to the seriousness of teaching religious truth. Fathers and mothers are coming to the teachers and asking about the progress of their children and they are showing interest enough to ask questions in the home. Such response is not as general yet as is hoped for, but the signs are encouraging.

GRADUATIONS

Until the school is firmly established in the minds of the church people and parents the business of passing pupils from one grade to another will not be a matter regulated as in the public schools. While a church school may have a standard for each grade, the system is not strongly enough intrenched to say that a child cannot go on until that standard is satisfactorily approximated. Another way must be devised which will recognize good work and place a premium upon it to the exclusion of work done in a negligent fashion and with no spirit of pride in accomplishment.

GRADE REPORT of

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

for the two months ending.....

Basis of grading:—A, very good; B, good; C, fair; D, poor. Attendance and Punctuality on a percent basis.

Attendance

Effort

Interest

Punctuality

Depotment

Attainment

Grade.....

.....Teacher

The board of First Church School has decided to experiment the present year on this basis: Children's Day, the second Sunday in June, will be observed as Graduation Day. On that day those in the eighth grade who have the consent of their parents will be graduated into church-membership and into the senior school. A special programme will have on it the names of all those who graduate and all those who pass from one grade into the next. Those who graduate or pass honorably will receive certificates, engraved cards, while the others who have not done satisfactory work, who have been late too often, and absent too much, will merely be noted as passing from one grade to the next. This step will have had adequate preparation because the parents know what is contemplated and so do the children. The eighth-grade students who graduate into church-membership will receive Bibles inscribed by the ministers of the church.

Once again let it be emphasized that the system of grading and graduation is largely an experiment, but then the whole scheme is one large experiment and only time will tell the result. It may be said, however, that these aspects of public-school administration are also still in the experimental stage.

CHAPTER VI

EQUIPMENT

JUDGED from the standpoint of elaborateness, the equipment of First Church School could not demand a separate chapter. It is because the equipment is simple and to be secured with little expense that special mention is made of it. Adaptability is the key-note of the whole plan and the equipment of any Sunday-school as now constituted could be used to advantage in the revised system of operation.

KINDERGARTEN

Little chairs and long, low tables are indispensable adjuncts of any kindergarten work; heavy drawing-paper, crayons, and blunt scissors are the materials which the children use at the tables. Sand-boxes in the form of long tables with an assortment of plain blocks are valuable aids to the teachers. A blackboard and a piano make up the rest of an equipment which, while it could not properly speaking be called extensive, is really the most elaborate in the whole school.

FIRST TO THIRD GRADES

Tables and chairs to conform to the size of the children are necessary; good work cannot be done

if the scholar is not comfortable. With the lesson material is a note-book for each pupil; this book, a pencil, and a box of crayons are kept in a large envelope of heavy linen and the envelope left with the teacher at the close of Sunday's work. The large envelope has the merit of keeping the scholar's work separate and clean. Each of the three grades should have a blackboard; upon it the teacher can illustrate (or find some one to do it) the work of each Sunday. A drawing in colored chalk is appealing to the younger scholars. For the assembly of the first three grades a child's song-book is useful, although the children can be taught by note by a skilled leader. (For the name of a good children's hymnal see Appendix.)

FOURTH TO EIGHTH GRADES

The same hymnal is used for these five grades because of their assembly together; the one in use in First Church School is especially good for teaching the best hymns of the church. (See Appendix.) In contrast to the old-time Sunday-school song-book, this new hymnal presents a noteworthy departure.

The lessons studied require a note-book for each pupil in the five grades, consequently tables and chairs are necessary for the class work. The long dining-tables covered with a heavy oilcloth may prove very useful for such work. As in the

other grades each scholar has a large heavy envelope for his note-book and pencil. Blackboards and maps are helpful in the fourth to the eighth and almost essential in the fourth and fifth grades.

For the dramatic instruction in the seventh and eighth grades a note-book is used by each pupil. No text-book covering the field adaptable for students' use has yet been published, although one very valuable for teachers can be secured. (See Appendix.) A book which includes within its covers simple dramatizations of a number of Biblical incidents and episodes in church history would be of inestimable assistance in such work.

On account of the size of classes separate rooms are highly desirable; the improved discipline and consequent better interest are well worth a vigorous attempt to secure a room for each grade.

A stage elaborately equipped is not essential to success in dramatizing Bible stories and religious incidents; an ordinary platform will serve as a starting-point for such instruction. Once the elementary principles of ordinary acting are instilled into the hearts and minds of the pupils, special bits of scenery and ideas for costumes will come spontaneously.

When the day of larger interest in religious education arrives, when churches are willing to give larger sums to the work of their schools of instruction, when church-members feel vitally that the children of to-day will be the church of to-morrow,

then church schools may be supplied with comfortable desks or chairs with desk-arms, attractive classrooms, abundant blackboard space, etc. Until that time the school must make use of the simple equipment at its command.

CHAPTER VII

THE MEASURING OF RESULTS

THE measuring of definite, tangible results in any kind of religious work has been and will always be a difficult undertaking. The difficulty exists not because there are no results to measure, but rather because those results find expression in so many and seemingly unrelated modifications. The sociologist who thinks to find by a second survey the good accomplished by a new system of housing discovers that his first survey has been bettered and he also discovers that better housing has influenced for the better phases of living which he had little or no idea of touching. Like leaven in bread his little original leaven has leavened the whole lump. The religious-education director will come to similar conclusions, time and again, and he will never be able to adequately measure results. He must content himself with observing carefully some of the outstanding rewards of a new system and deducting from them some of the real benefits of pioneering effort.

First Church, after a six months' trial of a new system of religious education for its children, is trying to measure results, but the church realizes that it cannot adequately do this now or even

years hence. Certain encouraging features have emphasized themselves, however, and the most important of these is the inauguration of the eight-year preparation for church-membership. This particular feature is appealing to parents with increasing force; it is making them realize that there really is a definite purpose back of the longer programme. Decision days and eight or twelve week preparatory classes are and will be for years to come part of the method of evangelical churches for bringing children into the church; no criticism of such a method need be voiced to emphasize the more purposeful idea of a longer period of preparation. This idea is the foundation upon which the future of the school will be built. To hold before a child through eight or ten years of church-school work the ideal of graduating into the membership of the church itself is to educate him to a sense of the high privilege and duties of such membership. The elementary principles of Christian living can much better be instilled through a long period of instruction than in a shorter term of concentrated education. Upon the age-old idea, then, of slow painstaking preparation First Church School is building and developing its long-term programme of church-membership training.

There follows another result which is becoming more and more apparent—the children are increasingly interested in their work. It was ex-

pected that a two-hour Sunday programme would not appeal to all; but those expectations were largely disappointed and the report is continually being brought in by parents: "I did not dream my child could become so interested in a Sunday-school. He comes home and tells us what he has learned, asks us questions, and in self-defense we are studying the Bible as we have never done before." A high percentage of attendance bespeaks an interested pupil and the new system has secured a per cent far beyond anything ever known in First Church. That the parents are co-operating is only another way of stating they are interested and trying in every way to supplement the work of the teachers.

An increase in practical religious and Biblical knowledge was expected and it has come; this is not the least of the results to be measured. Nothing is more discouraging to the superintendent of a church school than to visit classes and find there the most distressing ignorance of the lessons studied; his work of securing teachers and officers and his management of them all so that he may perfect a smooth-working organization seems to go for naught. On the other hand, it is vastly enheartening for a principal to know what to expect of a certain grade, visit that class and hear the pupils give the information he wants to hear. First Church School has passed through the first stage and is coming into the second; not every

scholar is a prodigy of learning, but the improvement in each group is sufficient to furnish ground for great expectations.

Better discipline is another result of the revised system that is undoubtedly making for more efficient work. Where formerly fourteen teachers tried to maintain order in fourteen classes in one large room, now one grade containing thirty scholars under a teacher and her assistant have the room; at present there is hardly a question of discipline, where formerly the struggle for attention and interest was prolonged and usually unsuccessful. This same condition is found throughout the school; it is an eloquent commentary on the behavior of the pupils as well as upon the ability of the teachers to state that more pupils are being taught under the newer form of work this year by half the number of teachers used last year.

Too great emphasis cannot be laid upon the faithfulness and ability of the teaching force. By means of the associate system, that is, every teacher having her associate, there has not been a Sunday when any class has been without the instruction of one or both of the regular teachers. That fact in itself has much to do with the interest of the scholars, the work accomplished, and the general efficiency of the school.

One other result among those already enumerated demands mention. Because the junior

school is held at the same time church service is held, the morning congregation has grown considerably; it is easy to see why. Parents of younger children bring them to the school and then go to church. Formerly it was a case of take the children to church or stay home altogether; many preferred the latter course. This statement gives occasion for the utterance of a complaint that parents do not take their children to church as they used to. That fact is granted, but there had better be a movement looking toward ultimate church-membership for the children with intelligent preparation than a senseless bewailing of the departure of the old type of church-attendance by children.

These, in brief, are a few of the results being secured in and by First Church School now. Interest on the part of the pupil is essential but no more essential than parental interest; regular attendance by the children is necessary, but the teachers must attend just as faithfully; instruction must be well given in the school, but home teaching as a supplement makes the original instruction much more effective. These are ideals continually preached by educators of all kinds. Church schools have viewed them heretofore as far off and visionary, but the experience First Church School is enjoying ought to convince Christians everywhere that such ideals need not only be longed for but sought for and attained

in part. When the church realizes that the future church is now in the church school no effort should be too great to make in behalf of a thoughtful preparation of the children of to-day for Christian citizenship.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

The materials used by First Church School, Toledo, Ohio, are as follows:

KINDERGARTEN:

"A COURSE FOR BEGINNERS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION." (Scribners.)

"LETTERS TO PARENTS FOR BEGINNERS' COURSE." (Scribners.)

FIRST GRADE:

"GOD THE LOVING FATHER." Supplies for teachers and pupils. (Scribners.)

SECOND GRADE:

"GOD'S LOYAL CHILDREN." Supplies for teachers and pupils. (Scribners.)

THIRD GRADE:

"JESUS' WAY OF LOVE AND SERVICE." Supplies for teachers and pupils. (Scribners.)

FOURTH GRADE:

"EARLY HEROES AND HEROINES." Supplies for teachers and pupils. (Scribners.)

FIFTH GRADE:

"KINGS AND PROPHETS." Supplies for teachers and pupils. (Scribners.)

SIXTH GRADE:

"LIFE AND WORKS OF JESUS." Supplies for teachers and pupils. (Scribners.)

SEVENTH GRADE:

"CHRISTIAN APOSTLES AND MISSIONARIES." Supplies for teachers and pupils. (Scribners.)

EIGHTH GRADE:

"HEROES OF THE FAITH." (Arranged chronologically.) Supplies for teachers and pupils. (Scribners.)

Music Instruction :

First to Third Grades—

"CHILD RELIGION IN SONG AND STORY." (University of Chicago Press.)

Fourth to Eighth Grades—

"HYMNAL FOR AMERICAN YOUTH." (Century.)

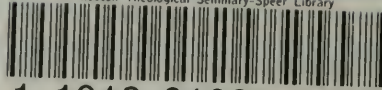
Dramatic Instruction :

Teachers' Text-book. "DRAMATIZATION OF BIBLE STORIES." (Erwin.)

Date Due

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